

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 and 28-30 are pending in this application and stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,006,225 ("Bowman"). Applicants respectfully disagree and request reconsideration of the present application in light of the above claim amendments and the below recited remarks.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-17 and 28-30 are pending in this application and stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,006,225 ("Bowman"). Applicants respectfully disagree.

The claimed invention is directed to refining a query by mapping the query to one or more search concepts. In particular, the claims require that each of the search concepts have a relative popularity determined by adding a number of popularity points to the search concept for each of a plurality of different query phrases that matches one of a plurality of key phrases associated with the search concept. The claims further require that the number of popularity points added to the search concept be proportional to a number of times that the query phrase appears in a query log.

The tables on the following page provide an example of how an aspect of the claimed invention may be implemented. The first table is a query log that stores a number of query terms which have appeared in previous queries. The number next to each query term indicates the number of times that the query term has appeared in previous queries. The second table illustrates two search concepts (New York and Chicago). New York has two associated key phrases (Manhattan and Big Apple) and, and Chicago has two associated key phrases (Windy City and Illinois). New York has a popularity of 7 because its associated key phrases have appeared in the query log a total of 7 times. Chicago has a popularity of 3 because its associated key phrases have appeared in the query log a total of 3 times.

QUERY LOG
Manhattan (4)
Big Apple (3)
Windy City (2)
Illinois (1)

NEW YORK (7)	CHICAGO (3)
Manhattan	Windy City
Big Apple	Illinois

Bowman disclose a query refinement table (See Fig. 5A) with a number of columns. Each column has a key term (140) and a number of corresponding search terms (142). Each time a search term appears in the same query with a key term, a point is added to the search term in the key term's respective column of the query refinement table. In her most recent communication to Applicants, the Advisory Action dated March 3, 2005, stated that the key terms of Bowman correspond to the concepts of the claimed invention.

Applicants respectfully submit that, in contrast to independent claims 1, 9, and 28 of the present invention, Bowman does not teach or suggest "concepts each having a relative popularity" (e.g. the key terms of Bowman do not have relative popularities). Furthermore, Bowman does not teach or suggest a that the relative popularity is determined by "adding a number of popularity points to the search concept for each of a plurality of different query phrases that matches one of a plurality of key phrases associated with the search concept, wherein the number of popularity points is proportional to a number of times the query phrase appears in a query log" (e.g. see the differences between Fig. 5A of Bowman and the Tables shown above).

DOCKET NO.: 158486.1 / MSFT-1351
Application No.: 09/682,040
Office Action Dated: November 29, 2004

**PATENT
REPLY FILED UNDER EXPEDITED
PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO
37 CFR § 1.116**

Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-8, 10-17, 29 and 30 are patentable at least by reason of their dependency. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejections are respectfully requested.


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CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and an early Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Date: April 29, 2005



Kenneth R. Eiferman
Registration No. 51,647

Woodcock Washburn LLP
One Liberty Place - 46th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19103
Telephone: (215) 568-3100
Facsimile: (215) 568-3439